



PRESS RELEASE

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ARIZONA MAN INDICTED FOR EMBEZZLING FEDERAL MONEY FROM NON-PROFIT GROUP

PHOENIX -- The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on August 26, 2004, a federal grand jury in Phoenix returned a two count indictment against Ferdinand Raymond Notah, DOB 7/22/53, recently of Saint Michaels, Ariz. on the Navajo reservation and now believed to be residing in or around Farmington, N.M.

The indictment alleges that from late 2000 until early 2003, Notah held the position of Executive Director of the Four Corners Enterprise Community Corporation (4CEC), a nonprofit organization created to secure and distribute federal grants for economic development projects in the most impoverished communities on the Navajo reservation. Between mid-2001 and late 2002, Notah allegedly embezzled over \$177,000 of U.S. Department of Agriculture funds granted to 4CEC, gambling away almost all of the money at various tribal casinos. Notah is being served with a summons to appear before the U.S. Magistrate Court for the District of Arizona to answer to the charges.

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The federal indictment charges Notah with violating Title 18 of the U.S. Code, Section 641, Theft or Embezzlement of Government Property, and Section 661, Larceny or Embezzlement in the Territorial Jurisdiction of the United States.

A conviction for Theft of Government Property carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General.

The prosecution is being handled by John J. Tuchi, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-04-0892-PHX
RELEASE NUMBER: 2004-145

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